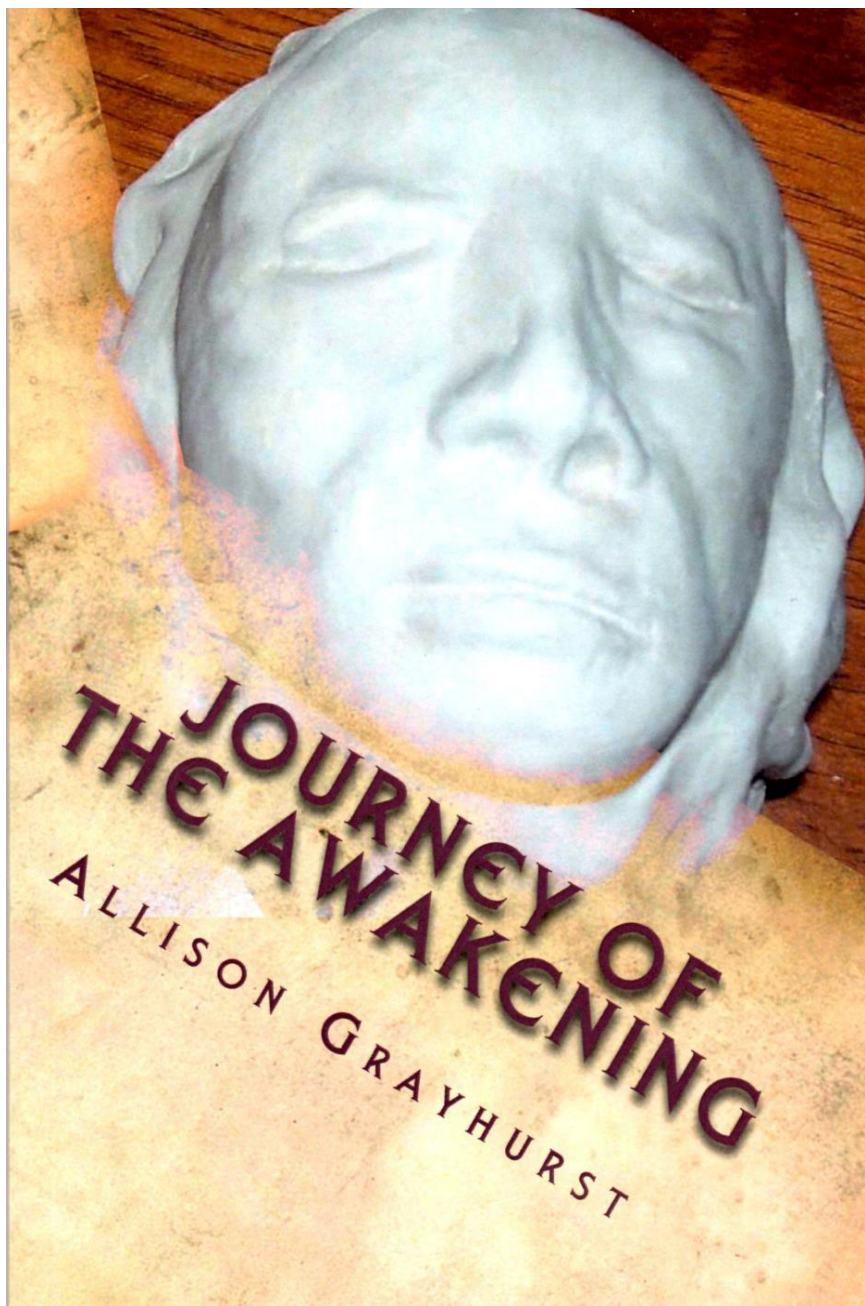




**JOURNEY OF
THE AWAKENING**

ALLISON GRAYHURST

Journey of the Awakening

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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The Unfolding

When first I cried
unsummoned tears,
stripped of all I owned,
the weather hammered further
into the marrow of my bones,
hammered until each splinter I swallowed
as a plea of hope and on my knees a
grey colour I was fixed.
Bowling like Job without his trust,
defying the ground that sustained me,
the love that soothed me, defying all
but the death and the guillotine mercy.

When second I cried,
I was not born a hero,
but happily released of my load,
I quickened my speed
and latched on to any shore.

When third I cried,
the answer came, giving choice,
demanding my house and rooms of many moods.
It came like a great and potent
ache of awakening, murdering
my self with its beauty.

When fourth I cried
I returned, still the same, but not
the same, having now a foundation
and a summit to guide and to strive
my whole lifetime to attain.

As I Sleep

No sun shone
on Adam's breast
when first his strength
was bled.
When sharp like a lion's tooth
the milk of dreams flowed,
half the sea perished
stale with prehistoric lineage.

And under the rafters where
unborn children wait,
I dreamed of a world
invincible with perfect hunger,
inching out of each curse -
all armour shed.
I dreamed a second life where
tenderness abounded. In every
pyramid, pavilion, parental hand,
the secret light was saved. The ones
who sought did not seek again for
desert and grave were one. And the
salt and bone in each breathing body bent
toward the sun. No angels came, neither did visions
that gave a full understanding.

For what was not accepted or surrendered
was broken, pierced
by a savage love.

Welcome The Death

Welcome the death
of holding death
like a smile. For all
that dreams within,
all that spreads uncorrupted
through the veins, turns its back
on oblivion, knows faith, knows
its destination is beneath the
stars.

Welcome the changing leaves, the
frosted flowers, the vanity of being,
of feeling one Self, whole before
the world.

Welcome the body, the counted pennies,
the child's plight and faces lost
in midnight light, eternally forgotten.

Welcome the one who stands, the one who
praises every cried-out syllable, purges
the soul of stagnant battles, hour upon hour
smells the freshness of renewal in clenched fists
and phones that never ring.

Welcome the sound of a remembered kiss
and the ghosts that grieve forever
beside each mortal heart.

Seizing Time

Legs, thin
and curled
like eyelashes.

Hands, tucked under head,
supporting the weight of so much
lonely thought.

Stomach, a flat curve,
bones and muscles perfectly
ordered.

Sleeping, no one would know
his timeless howl, his long
wait in grief's unrelenting realm,
his requiem fire, or spirit
that outdoes the marvel
of daybreak.

Quiet, he finds
no peace on the pavement of this town,
he holds solitude sacred and feels
each soul's whisper as an unnursable cry.
He breaks all habit with his horn
of piercing mercy.

He, so still, even birds
hold their song to watch
his placid breathing.

Being Followed

The town is dark
with frost & fist.
The moon punishes the streets
with its sultry glare.
She walks down the narrow alley
followed by
a small-eyed stranger:
Large hands in pockets.
Grey hair stinking
with spray. Quick breath
in her lungs. Fear
filtered into her veins.
She looks to the trees for
comfort, looks for the nearest
exit. Does not
turn back. Does not
run, but hears
his heavy steps
stalking from behind.
She begins to pray. But
still the moon's mocking
mask & still the flowers
sleeping & still
his approaching eyes, void.

Young Visionary

Brave before the approaching dawn,
his vision breathed
an easeful flow.

He spoke not of disease consuming
but of terrible extremes and of death's helpful shock
and immediacy.

He cried for love he never touched
and of the aching joy of being and
being tied to this Earth, beyond
generation, beyond heritage.

He wrote with a rich anger,
agonizing over such a demanding
muse, condemned to be short-lived.

He pulsed with adolescent frenzy, free
from too much experience, pure with
a deep madness, cooling his heart
with each desperate release.

Liquid Grey

These shapes I lose
like the hum of breath, lose
in a room like this
that breeds dumb despair.
I cry not knowing what
such grief dominates, feeling
the gully deepening, crossing
beyond all sensation of the sun.
I am what I cannot tell, am
drinking in this mild death,
discordant as a scream or dream.
I dream in shadows. I work within the zodiac spheres.
I see beyond but cannot kill
my fate nor offer a crumb
of kindness
to my enemy's mouth.

Thieves Of Muse

I hope my star does not
shift from Earth and sight,
into galaxies unbridled by
God. And that my vision has
hair and pulse, enough
to reach the primal light, grow
a new strength with each
passing defeat.

*In hours of climbing the worn pillars of love, as death
forces on through sleep, futility & tears, and climbing,
climbing to no avail, to see no sun, feel only the cold
shattering of heartbreak and the mind undoing . . .*

Through That Day

Through that day of yesterday
one full sun ago, together, their
spirits fed, walking as lovers past
familiar streets.

Warm smell of intimacy flowing between two
like nectar to the thirsting throat. Warm feel
of smiles like there was the first time they ever met
and met like a finding of home.

Warm grace in their voices, warm fear
in their laughter, warm
like a justborn child.

There when walking their depths
merged in an uncompromising blessing -

the chaos of confusion
removed
from their astonished eyes.

This Is Not To Suffer

**the thinning years of a lifespan
roped by bitter nightfall**

**the volt of mourning that
mourns the range of ambition to success**

**the blind rodent that frees
itself of self-preservation**

**the hard days of unknowing that
last beyond the taking of bread**

**and the meadow that aches of
aloneness, aches to drive a soul inward.**

This is not to suffer,

**the long giving of love
that receives none in return.**

On Tour

Pale as the Eastern gulls sitting on rooftops,

he speeds over the wide country.

He hurts with uncommon intensity -
liberation balanced between his two lips.

Like the slow hum of rain, I hear him
treading the snowed-in cities, hear his kiss
like a prayer of protection, flowering.

Freedom stitched to his smile,
he crosses the sea he's never seen before,
as he carries his guitar
like a lover's warm hand.

Adrift

Stripped of temper
and the tossing blue.
The sky weighs on me like a globe.
Beginning in the curve of my tongue, I hide
my sorrow like an eel.
I dive past daybreak
into the ditch of midnight.
Guilt is my patched umbrella.
I am only a few feet from home -
a penny in my pocket, a chain
I cannot lose. I want to learn
of pastures where the dying are saved
by prayer, where each captive beast
is released and love is not compared.
Reptiles in the morning clouds.
A snake around a leaf.
I hope to build a boat for patience.
Clinging to a fragment of a tree
I count each schoolless fish,
and tilt against the tide.

Truth To Be Told

With this weight
clinging to my laughter,
cold weight of you
and your indifferent love,
shadows drag by my side
draining my spine of its thick marrow.

And you, on the phone, with neither
peace nor passion in your voice,
may as well tell me
you are regretting the days
once with me, have decided
to remain newborn on the crust
of some exclusive adventure, in foreign
cities, on unexpected streets, stay,
swimming in immediacy where the miracles
are yours alone to claim and keep
and the remembrance of my smile
has no effect.

Not Enough

Here

is how it feels to be toyed with when
hungry, to be taken when
in love, to be sent back when
needing so much just to find a window to
leap through, something to make
my hands tight with conviction, to be
overweight with passion.

Here

is how cruel your slick indifference is,
decaying my devotion for higher places,
taking the syrup from my smile, and the
crippled sun it brings.

Here

afraid, deep in the sinister void,
deep in Monday night, deep in the
left-over memories.

Here

down like a coffin weight, down
into indulgent depths, down
into the thickening ache, determined still
yet to rise . . .

Desire

does not come
like tolerance, learned,
worked for. Withstanding
cruelty, dry lips,
wild pain, it grows larger
than love and God and grows
until all gestures reveal it.

Secretly in the shade of devotion,
it rages. Crouching behind churches and
stairwells, it tongues its drug sweeter
than touch. Burns the stomach, starves
the heart of faithful riches.

When it comes it has no error
nor the unanchored presence
of doubt.

When it comes, it comes riding,
circling like nightfall
the soul's great yolk.

For Waldo

Am I to speak of the hangnail pain,
though no season was lost and there
are no backstairs to climb?

Am I to miss you in the garden
we never had, in the memories
of never being close but always
being near?

And the time you ran frightened of me
through the alleyways, as though we never loved,
never knew the trust of wounds
we helped each other heal. Never you
wanting more than to maintain
your dignity, your freedom, your
contemplative stare. Never you
giving more than the most
of your compassion, the gentle restraint
of your excited spirit.

And to die like that,
killing the final cord. Stinging slowly, so slow
it's hard to cry, to not wish one last swim with you
under the full moon just staring
forever into that small-town sky.

When Worlds Collapse

Falling into places, into
mazes of loud but hidden
hopes, where none but the
stars can interpret.

Falling without instrument,
turning a common colour.

Falling into wounds
that cannot grow wings or
struggle toward the sun.

Falling, finding
these places, no places to name with
the tongue.

Falling, praising
every prison I pass, every touch
of newness in the flame of falling.

in the oblivion of falling.
in the birth of falling,

falling, for once, upright,
absent of fear.

Oldest of Wars Between All Lonely Breasts

Underneath, with a bolt of egotistic rage,
it comes, building shrines in my dark pockets.

And when my heart is weak,
it lures me into its dismal hovel
as if to comfort
with its corrupt tongue.

Pale as the snows, it is without fire,
sapping my juices impotent.

Jealous, it wraps
its leprous paws around
my core, hungering
for obedience.

Robe of awful night, it writhes,
clinging to my skin.

I am burnt by the terror of doubt and
indignant madness
that rents me out to the lust of despair.

I hear the moans of angels, but they are helpless
to intervene, tied to the law of reach-and-reach-back.
Panting now, I try to embrace this beast in play,
uproot its fangs, tame its sly strength. But there are
two atmospheres clashing within, raging to win
side by side - raging to smother my struggle
with one abiding victory.

Placeless

**You are far, without a face.
Six nights on the bed beside
your brooding limbs, the covers
piled between us like a clotted vein.
I know you are sad, but it is never
enough just to say it,
to feel my arms full of your aching,
feel the fine fibres of isolation
choke your core until only the cramp remains.**

And the longing in your eyes knows no bounds.

Beach

Foreign,
at the bottom of an agony
to relish the sweet and wonderful
Earth, to see the painted
complexion of a twilight sky, smile
at the coming current of darkness,
holding out two arms to receive:

As I walk the pale pink sands, watching
the splendour of colours
transform and surround, the moon
gives out a breath and

is born.

Beggar Island

Long this beggar island
where the sky above starves
for praise and the nerves
of all breathing things
are ill with restlessness.

Long this beggar island
where mauled flowers suffer
on porches bare of rocking chairs
and wondrous eyes.

Long like a day alone is long,
like the waiting for a lover's call,
or a good change or summer.

Long this beggar island
where voices behind curtains,
behind sadistic sarcasm,
call the innocent to supper
to harm what once was free.

Long this beggar island
where no covenant is kept
and all and all walk on,
unconsciously yearning for death or
for home.

Shyla

The green dust of your eyes,
the cameo coat of your
body sleeping like
a chinaglass doll, still
by the window's light.

The years and thoughts I cannot
exchange with you nor hope
to savour a single shared
laughter, but between
these broken walls, under the hand
of my affection
your warm head
moves like a small star,
gracing.

Bless The Fallen

**Bless the fallen, the less than ghost faces
that haunt this cityscape.**

**Bless the one who cannot give, who cannot
nurse a broken heart.**

**Bless the one hardened by degrees, by small failures
that mount a life incapable.**

**Bless the proud bearer of truth who cannot be humbled,
blinded by spiritual vanity.**

**Bless the arrogant, the one who feels movement
only by force.**

**Bless the bearer of bitterness, who has no stronghold
but hate.**

**Bless the one who fails to see the birds fly, hear
the angels in their dreams.**

**Forgive us our canyons where self-pity reigns
and self-pity devours.**

**Hold us near the harbour light though the chaos of sea
be the only realm
we, as of yet, have known.**

Dreams Renounced

**With the woods and the sea and
the children that light the path
what need we of words? What
antidote could we stomach
to join our hearts as they
rock side by side?**

**In this used-up city
of hot suffering and plucked bones,
where do we announce our vanished
devotion, to whom can we cry the
loss of moonlight and hope?**

**We sleep without the warm touch
of need. We sleep like mountains,
secret, each
onto our own.**

Missing You

So intolerable is the fierce drain
of having you but
not having you
by my side.

So hard to talk
on the phone of missing you
while the universe lies veiled and vaulted
from my sight.

While you laugh and sing
and I sleepwalk in the sun;

voice, unable to chime; voice
that leaps then fails, calls
to you then crumbles like some
useless gesture; voice,
full of the fury of assassins, soft
like a slug's boneless belly cries
to you of the loneliness
and of the need; voice
that needs your uncompromising devotion,
but gets mute and lost, then sees
that such a thirst
is fatal.

So Much Glory Stillborn

**There was you
holding tight to your need, full
of the killing night.**

**There was you and no one
exceeded you in your terrible love
and in your milking**

**of quiet rains, as in my arms your size
dominated the sun and awoke my wings
to fan and flourish.**

**But long before the sterile sleep of years
showered by compromise, long before the tossing
from side to side, afraid**

**of kissing and the commitment it may bring.
Long before now, falling prey
to this angry hunger**

**that drums an inevitable goodbye
and crushes cruel like cruel will never
crush again.**

Bonded

Notes stream over their bodies
like spilt wine,
dizzy with forgetfulness
and engulfed by devotion's
desiring arms, they quench
their love in these realms
of trembling communion.

They do not lean their heads
on ground of finite meaning but
transported to a common passion
they stare at the wonderful eyes of
the moon and roll like the sea's emotion,
bodies gripped by one hawk intent, hearts
undiluted by distraction, joined forever
in dance or defeat.

Bed Fellow

Night freezes like wet hair to the skull,
signifies a choir of cries
dragged into the dark wind by the masses of
dying. And dying like a father eventually
dies to his child's need for
mercy, like a mouse dies
being blindly tossed between feline
fangs, night has no miracles. Has long been
home to nocturnal insects, to open snares and
moods too heavy to comfort. Night is
noose to the broken-down pilgrim,
to the loud dancer who step
by step howls for freedom. Night is the
drunken wood of broken heroes,
the artist's menacing koo-koo koo-koo.
And lo! to feel the mirror in the night
rise before face and eyes, condemning
with its vague outline,
the thinning form of all and every
hope, reality!

Shell of a Serpent

These are great things,
what you take
with your mounting neglect.
They are things cast out
of the 'beautiful', that
dig into polar ice and
fossilize there; numb, cold,
indistinguishable.

And though you feel superior,
inhuman, hovering above
with a face carved
in one constant expression, you yourself
will not give light to the
lonely, will not illuminate
for the sake of another's need.

Your own pain, (*cunning, hunting*) is a
tentacle that quivers cold-blooded
for pity's gullible caress:

You distance your heart from the humble dancers.

It is not like hell

**but like a fathomless void,
hammering wicked
on the civilized heart, emerging
like a great anger out
of each fundamental nerve.**

**It is like failure, like a
cold and ruthless insanity that tugs
aimlessly on the mind's fine fibres.**

**It is like me and I am
prey to the avoided, to the ugly, whirlpool
mouth of isolation, witness to the long
journey through death and need.
I am prey to the contemptuous
dark that gnaws its way under
every freshly formed smile.**

**It is not like innocent pain
but like a tearing or a mutant fear
that piles and piles,
possessing.**

When One Falters

The cold and conquered spheres
of a love once endowed with light,
but ruined by faithlessness,
wedges between winter's strength
and night's repelling dread.

Always him, thirsting for chaos
to consume, treading on atmospheres
immersed in false perfection. Never him
mourning a tender cry, but crying
of vengeful abandonment, spawns his
curse into every nearing hope.

And she, alone, surrendered to the sacrifice,
pursues a new devotion, walks
from his contagious self-contempt,
loving not his potential, but the memory
of his striving heart,
(once fresh with expectation,
now extinguished, turned against itself
like a scorpion cornered).

She alone, accepting the lonely oblivion
of loss, the unquenchable incompleteness, rises
from day to day on mortal ground,
restoring.

Epitaph

Those years of voyaging
too long beneath your axe-shelter
on foreign terrain . . .

Those years of you with
your spiritual arrogance, your perfect face and
careless conceit, all behind me
now like a madness hatched and slaughtered.

Though I try to stand straight on the path
of forgiveness, in memory, I rebleed
my muzzled cry. And anger as deep
as your self-confidence bridles my
heart again in that old ache, that sick
humiliation; your vindictive laughter, your
manipulative smile.

From you, the cut neck, the finger pointing.
From you, something
to recover from.

Two Hundred Years Gone

Lost like some are
that would wish to fly
on mad and terrible dreams.
Lost like those who starve themselves
of sleep, plunge into
the unscouted depths.

Nature's seductive hymn

takes your mind past

the lonely void

to where your signature forms,

and your voice hatches out of spring

like the primrose and the daffodil.

Lost like time is lost
to the very old and very young.
Lost like the original light,
that weaves in the hearts of some
to help the rest of us survive.

If This My Person . . .

**I do not know any more
how to speak of the burning
wires.**

**How to dress
the cramp with
dream.**

**I am simple now, like a shell,
a swallow, a
first-love.**

**I do not walk with an eagle's foot,
do not stir myself naked from
sleep**

into a gallery of torments imagined.

**That is gone like
desire**

**that clings and begs
for miracles, like a boat that
breaks**

**the waters then is broken
by a great
Tide . . .**

With These Things

With these things absent of flame, lovers
deny the vibrant depths of twilight,
the beauty of a bucking mare in the wet grasses
of autumn and a gallery of possibilities
to shower their skins.

With these things of surface-hold, these things
cured by sleep and time that steals the shock
but never fully heals, lovers
lose the meaning of their merging, the touch
of each other's tongue that touches
like a smooth horn and stings
with unimaginable tenderness.

With these things gone like things go that
no sorrow can express, lovers
grow weak from humiliation, grow
devoted to abstraction, armoured
by resentment, callous
as a jewel.

But with these things of horror of hatching
a new self inside a familiar world, lovers
learn to fly despite the lovers' legends and
the arsenic.

When We Spoke Again

Not all these things were destroyed
though the expensive pain was made solid.

Not all these times are forsaken
even though the trees sway and strike
and the days are often cruel.

Something starved of understanding
is furnished by faith, comes back to bubble
in the eye like a slow and easy smile.

Now I speak at this table
like none of the suffering did me
damage, like I am plucked

from the poor dark, remembering,
all those dreams were showered
by perfect rain.

After Rejection . . . (if only)

**To blaze forth the anger of doubt, grieve
my breast robbed of joy.**

**To drink the stream from furious eyes,
and clip the proud anguish from my tight jaw.**

**To send flying the irrational gestures
that dig like a cat's claw into
my naked lips, withering my depths
of all understanding.**

To know a faith so whole it hurts like love.

**To plunge into the androgynous heart that
sings & hurts the same
for all.**

To Die For The Heart's Illusions

**She is your halo, angel
that plagues you with her light,
slashes your self-defeat
with her wooing purity.**

**She gives you great meaning
to go on. A perfect child-god,
untouchable like an abyss: blue eyes,
sun-toned hair, like you in her
reflection.**

**She is delicate, holy, in need
of your protection. Daughter that swells
your cup overflowing with messianic intent.**

**But little girl, human
with her own flaws, that
you will never acknowledge, never
relinquish your idolizing love. . .**

**. . . from the cold claim of isolation,
where your raving dragons howl
as you drink her smile
like a remedy . . .**

Dancers

He dressed her with forgiveness
in the gold shadows
of passion
seeking death, seeking the
swelling heart
of God. Under
the weight of his wings, into some
starless summit they rose, clasping
limbs with alien abandon. Each rich
with superstition, as in the forest
terror
poured from the tip of each tree,
from the tongues of black bears and insects
crawling.
They held, waiting for too bright
a birth between them, waiting for the
magic to merge
their pain into one great beginning.
Like the thighs of angels in flight,
their thighs
cut the warring air and smashed against the sky
into gales of
colour, into streams
of happy endings as they
dropped like a flood
at the feet
of death, and love
began to weave
under
their astounded skins.

You came to me

**through the hard jaw of the world,
anguished, under the weight of bad habits,
your happiness fading like
your fate, into a fine line running out.**

**You came, prowling the landscape, out of
some gripping past, eyes driven deep by
loneliness.**

**You came, dressed in feline black, carrying
the weight of a shattered city
in your arms, and your blood was cold
with howling.**

**From the snows, finding me with a glance, you came
like spring in my nostrils
and cried & cried as you came
plummeting down, lost from some angel's
symbolic grasp.**

If You Wait . . .

**When he comes
he will be wearing rings of endless
symbol. He will be like a wave,
strong, flexible, seeking shore.
You will know him by his smell
and the way his voice sounds in the rain.
He will lie beside you like a childhood friend,
abandoned to breath and peace
beyond measure.
Rich with depth and kindness,
he will cradle your head on his chest
and you will bless the wound that almost
killed, then brought you near
his familiar blood.**

Blood-red Symphony

**Down the sickly throat
of this sadness bloomed,
no love can reach
 (The petals are charred.
 My mind, locked in patterns,
 rebels against freedom)
From this spill of stability,
this testimonial defeat,
the colours break from
sunset to void and
the world outside
turns menacing
with indifferent shadows, with creatures
without breakthrough, animated
silhouettes that know no suffering or simple
passion.**

I Lived an Error

**in smoke, in a station
amidst
the clouds.
I rolled through
phantom pits,
finding fondness in each
fathomless descent.
With thick confusion
my mortality was stained.
I was taken past
my generationstalking
God
in every science and witch-craft cure,
takenpast the face
of condemning visions. Taken
like a lingering
pain, pulling me through,
tearing with terrible force
the sickness
from my soul, and yet
as tender as a riverwave
in gentle flow, guiding me
onward**

This Love We Hold

**This was the endurance sought,
moving without sorrow away from
spear and shield, loving again
chained to the most-impossible-dream
and yet surviving unveiled,
with each envy rectified, removed.**

**Happy are the flowers that pierce
with swift vibrancy the
down-trodden eye. Happy are the flowers
that briefly shine then suddenly collapse
without sacrifice or a moan.**

**Never did I hope to own a stone
so cold, spread across my flesh
like a darkened shell. Never did I know
a void so dull and so insatiable.
Never ascending like I ascend now in a gathering
of clouds that eclipse the birds and mirror
on the lake so grey.**

**I went walking and knelt before the trees.
Wise days of youth and fresh love that
made us bare of questions, made us sick
from such intensity. I held your presence
in my breath and breathed my spirit
free. Freed from phantoms awakened,
freed from the pendulum tide.
Free to outspoke the wind
and ride beyond the parasite of time,
beside you and sustaining
forevermore.**

I Dream This Shelter, This Precipice

**Your rare and bare natural tongue
and your unfathomable kisses, distinct
like the sun, that dwell without limits
on my lips.**

**The torrents of your quick pulse and your
slow release, overfill my chasm, brings warmth
where warmth is no longer felt, only
the driving nail of locked souls - yours and mine
and all things sacred, accumulated like this
in the wild deep.**

Country Ride

Long fingers like ribs
stroke the sky in mortal shades.

Time, watching trees
planted in fields,
so alone and tied
to all eternity.

Time, seeing the liquid
eyes of cows, and horses
without a tribe, drifting
from grass strand to strand.

And again, the treetops like
sackcloths of autumn orange and red,
take all attention
from the barns.

Dogs in the distance run
feverish
and free.

Unmasking the Bone

The suffering released
you of certainty,
made you mourn your innocence.

A brutal burn that crying could not erase.

His hand reaching out to yours,
never changing in its irrational cruelty.

And faith - it commands you to follow. Compels
you to let go, leap into the lungs
of a new god, a god
that makes one thing real
and takes all else in return.

You sit by rivers watching, trust only
hooks and horns for a time.

For a time the horror stalks you,
he follows your step
over landscapes and continents,
calls you every night
with a new shock to harbour.

You say it is a canyon he has cut, full
of dry thorns where no thirst is eased.

But what is the refuge wished for?
Is freedom too impossible
a word to use?

And what of him with his
opalescent depths and
offensive truths?

What of you, who labours for a desireless love,
striving?

Have Faith In The Fall

Your tide
lets loose the havoc
of untamed emotions.

Your young smile,
your eyes watch
every novelty with untainted desire.

You sleep
with your warm-womb remembrances, remembering
each day spent trusting, beyond innocence
and encroaching adulthood.

You fear a climbing intent,
the discovery of
a shared room cold with hate.

You enter
the boiling light
with no hand to hold.

You, and those years
cutting like an eclipse
the wild purity of your extreme heart.

You, and loving you
as you walk today, in the clutches
of this harrowing lesson.

In a Room With Somebodies

**Your chains fall loose, you lose
the weight of
being.
Proud, nervous, drenched in
mysterious dependency,
you hold
your cup of coffee, unable to make
conversation. Surgically removed
from the crowd, your smile
fades like a snapped tail,
travels into the pit
of your waters, into
the climate of your rolling, twisting
depths. Waves
that beckon your emotions to chime,
rush from belly
into hands and eyes, rush
into the choking
air. You,
restless from living too long
beyond
the skin, hold tight
your alien love, hold in
the cries of your forming compassion and long
for exit.**

To Walk Without Shape or Sound

That I cling to this cold sleep,
show little effort to be removed . . .

In nightmares of symbols grey and mortal,
fears translate all my hope
into an impatient temper, and I stand,
arms folded, with threatening glances
turned toward the window.

That I will not move from this unhappy
bondage, give the world the wave it deserves and
rejoice, full force in my non-belonging . . .

That I lay with false sorrow, my numbing wounds
displayed like so many movies, consuming
all thought and vision . . .

Drowning in unutterable loneliness, I
cannot pray this bad taste off my tongue,
cannot claim my home inside the lightning jaws.

I have seen the light abandoned for the hangnail's
torment. I have seen this darkness, dug my head deep
in its flaming mud.

But this is nowhere:

There is only
the circle, the spiral journey
up
only to be like the animals and angels,
uncommitted
to the weather's foothold.

He of Fear and Hunger

He, held hostage by the world's blade,
took his lovers with impersonal want.

He, never seizing with strength
his orphaned heart, but building
a fear of dependency, let harden
the soft bones of his under-wrists
and left each emptiness he found
unanswered.

He, abandoned to be ruled by rigid souls,
wandered under the atonement of many dawns,
refusing any shelter, refusing
to shoulder the burden
of his blood.

He, with his groin of aching suckle,
risked love to save his dignity.

He, of wilderness doom and burn
was solitary as a long-sitting
stone.

Thin Rope To Hold

**Drum hard on the wound
entangled in my eyes.**

**Drum me a backroad
to forgiveness.**

**And the venom of revenge,
drum that out too until its murdering addiction
lies down.**

**I wait beside these deadly
roots - these are my nerves
clogged with insecurities.
How sharp this shrill in my heart
that never catches fire!**

**Drum free my harvest
then show me the language
of weeds.**

I Watch My Shelter Fall

**I swim, revolve like a planet
through the cosmic black, around
a sun of infinite heat, bruising
space as I go with my presence.**

**Non-stop battle of my spirit lusting
for flight while my body's on ground, growing
mad with the weight of habit.**

**I need to feel the sky splitting
from my voice, to have the courage
to construct something enduring, a love
enduring.**

**I am full of a future unborn, full of the terror
of awakening.**

**I am leaving my heritage behind.
I am lifeless now as any
broken twig.**

No Telling

Taking back
the soft mood
the cockfight fire

I shrink from happiness as I do from horror,
while still craving the intensity of extremes.
There is no witchcraft cure, no person
unchanged by the constellations.

Taking back
the long-held hurt
the herd dream
and the tender gesture
Taking back the tyrannizing void
the genius ache
and the doldrum eve

There is no faith that can be won by force
and no telling what
my heart is willing to die for,
transcending.

In Some Uncertain Future

**I will sing again
of love that has found its verb and swell
and the avalanche of summer clouds will
consume me in their infinite shapes.**

**I will cry again
the beautiful cry for the marriage of
heart and soul that must separate to
know each concealed fault.**

**I will know again
my soul split from shock,
the mind's tumbleweed and the choirs of
starlings beneath the overpass, baying
into endless sundown.**

**I will feel again
that I am sinking like a snagged bird
from the sky of my belonging, feel the
things of guilty souls and how the night
can rid a heart of wonder.**

**I will see again
a tribe of dark horses racing
on rooftops, my breast, an ocean of rolling moons
and an indelible smile.**

**I will hold again
a duty of religious flare, a winter
bolted in the void where the snows
begin to fall like cut daises.**

As Far As This Light

**To be at the point of breaking, always
but never torn.**

**A season that fills my skull, steals
embraces from my arms.**

**All is new like the first
fire touched,
like the squirrel and the centipede
witnessed for the first time
as pure presence.**

**Such clarity I cannot cloud with
distraction, cannot thin
the intensity of this load.**

**Relentless challenge
that finds me, bends me, wills
my voyage.**

Promise

I let drop a stone
into a pond.
I raise a dead star,
as a promise lies dormant
in the clouds' damp veins.

I will go with my
trembling bones,
trespassing the edge.

For someone waits
behind shackled doors
for me and
my love.

The Foliage of Our Music

Near the shut lives of people
who love intangible,
who hide within the spell of seasonal spirituality,
you are the all that intoxicates my hunger,
summons my vision beyond
its threshold, takes my hand amidst
the tyranny of worldly demands and loves
me through my weeping - your body happy
to receive me, to blanket me with touch. Your hair
and belly and your thin bones
that carry such a restless warmth that
only sharpens each day with charm and insight.
No one desires like you the forgotten passions,
reads to me the marrow from books and dances
with mad laughter when seeing the solemn
horrors of most daily deeds.
No one grows so weighted with sorrow,
so beautified by empathy as you when tracing
the footsteps of the oppressed, visiting
each broken with a dense compassion
that embraces all as your equal.

Haggard hope between us
to avenge the space that splits
our love with petty differences.

I spend no delight but dread
the thorny flame of loneliness, of
loving again a lesser love, looking
into some appealing eyes that are not
your eyes nor know the things
of your kind wisdom.

Receiving

Though I recognize kin
in a bird's faultless face,
the world is wheel, is cold,

master of my open heart.
And out on the streets, away
from embraces, the sun
disturbs in its strength and independence.

People grow old
before my eyes,
stirred by nothing
but further comfort.

Fire cloud above - it is
this hunger, this old faith, old
as God. This faith so clean
I may go mad, harder than love
to bear:

Endless cutting down.

Battleground on the Inside

**He takes my feet from the fossil earth,
takes me to where a tribe of insects wait
to wed me with their hive.**

**I join the lunar cold light, harming
nothing, harmed by nothing, but yet my
history engulfs my silent head, speaks of
moments blind with guilt, moments when I
bore inspiration like I bore my breath and I cannot
contain my melting indifference, cannot help
myself to wake from such longing to return
to ground.**

**The sun rolls like a snail through
the mist just beyond the Earth's other side as
I drift in night and circle
the sky's expanses, waiting
for my enemy in his own
dimension.**

Crowned

The large June light
is woven with the clouds
like a wind to steal away all breathing.
And on the moving Earth, lawnmowers
roar and little snails crawl across
the wet pavement.
There are no more dreams, only this
woodchip swallowed and the bright water
cared for.
The fog has shown me my substance.
I eat my plums whole and wish
for my child everything tender and alive.
I feel the breeze through the window, taking
the curves, turning me over like a patch
of rotted grass. I am now beginning to be collected,
to answer to this new name and see my past
through a fearless eye. I feel the kick
of a new vision formed and feel
the gentlest of mercies
roll down my chest like a kitten.
This is lunch, an autumn leaf waxed
and the laundry dried.
Give me birth. My body skips across the edge,
and all good things are finally waking.

Seeking the Balanced Degree

My mind is painted bright blue
like a pair of favourite jeans.
My belly is bread for thieves. Here
the crime awakens:
I drink from the eternal teat
of responsibility, from the lake
of suffering I must ignore
to breathe a steady rain, to scatter
my guilt amongst the weeds.
What happens when your all is nothing?
or when the truck runs you down seeing only
anonymous hairstrands and entrails?
Knowing love's limitations,
like one knows the snows or the teeth
of an animal, is the tension that frees.
An enemy is at my table.
A horse is buried under American sands.
My heart is water:
It longs to quench the hot summer skin of sparrows.

Rain in the morning

Rain in the morning,
grey steel is in the sky,
and in my eyes the colour
shows. The night's fury kept me awake
since 3 am. My troubles are like spiders
that creep and curl along the
ceiling, hovering with the stillness
of death. I must keep going
though my body aches with fever
and my mind is prey to despair. I drink
necessity's authority. To watch a loved-one suffer
is worse than shame, worse than feeling
futility collapse on your throat
or a weapon held at the head.
Rain in the morning. It is a mistake to
hurl the emptiness outward, to pray for the destroyed
or curse the goldfish for their beauty.
But who can give the minerals meaning,
magic to the snail, or purity to the worm?
Rain in the morning.
Little by little the terror rises,
and the world outside remains unchanged.

For This Face Only You Could Alter

**Be for me my mask torn down.
Take from me my old and hatching temper.
Take my wanting, my struggle
to renounce approval.
Be for me the lonely desire, the one
celebrated by each breath.
Take the guilt from my
loins, the hours spent mute,
consumed by fear.
Be for me a living arrow, a communion
of conviction and gentleness.
Take from me my fate, a conditioned future,
an inevitable plan.
Love me though my love
is sensual, thin of voice, of spiritual
decision.**

Love Unknown

I sit inside a tent
needing what I cannot drink.
I grieve the lost passion of my prayers
and the solid breath of death's
all-consuming maw.

Tracing the fantastic light
of giant love that crushes chaos
with each monstrous embrace,
I taste him. I cannot help
feeling his fears like
a hated obstacle, his forehead like
an impassable field, full of his mind's
worst whispers:

I sit within this tent, in a trance-like gloom.
I grieve his love that cannot bend . . .

yet tender still
is his smile.

Christened

Because of you, my blood is nourished.

Just beside one another

in laughter or decay, passing looks

that bid for nothing.

Because of you I am able to blink

where others are blinded:

I bury heartbreak in our kissing.

I Hope Your Dreams Anew

**You drink from the jugular
with uptight gestures and hold
in your eyescorn and condescension.**

**On your political altar your feeble gods
sit, dreaming of fame from your tongue.**

**Once rich with a fire catching,
you did with delight the things
of sharing.
You made with your hands a prelude
to magic.**

**But what mercy was crushed by
your self-assured ways? What tolerance was
stifled by your righteous crown?**

**I cannot be, I cannot envy
the yellow death surrounding,
nor hate the stain of your pride.**

**But be that blue whisper that echoes
through each moan and laughter
of immortal needs.
But be that stone that makes
an arrogant person fall,
withdraw into a deeper understanding,**

be it there for you, somewhere, overwhelming . . .

This Wound, This Reminder

**Here what once was heavy is now like a
hollow seed resting on the inside**

everlasting.

**Here what has been dead but does not die
gains not growth nor speed and has long ago**

ceased

**to bleed but remains a part of
for now and for all futures to**

carry

**and to help set the truest faith
breathing and free.**

Because of course

you will go with summer
never knowing a remedy.
You will go beyond where you go
around the ninth and final life, ducking
in dark boxes to fade finally alone,
away from instinct and nurturing.
You will go into the natural earth,
and from there, my vision staggers and
cannot name, but caught
on the wind, in sensual shades
of forgiveness mighty & forever,
you will know a place unhindered by death.
You will hear the secret
your pale eyes
have always harboured.

As My Blindness Burns

Without these things
of rainbow and insight
I stand, fragmented
by despair, fleeting as daylight,
composed of failed hopes
and held-back tears.

Young, like truth is
when first found,
are the swollen joys
of new understandings.
And secret still is
the unsculpted future
that rises unexpected without
resolution.

The muses of this universe hold faith
and doubt equally
in their impregnated beams,
and me with my hideous cowardice
that grows stronger with age, hides
the things that challenge
and direct me to an edge, ignoring the
simple surrender needed
to grow and to deeply be
someone.

This city sobs
when hearing its own wind die,
takes in its industrious hands
the sluggish and the bitter.

And the few who rebuke
this smog-breathing serpent
lean depleted in each other's arms,
hoping to embody something beyond
the world or melancholic pain.

And here, wanting, each slave is born, each
mistrust upheld like a perfected attitude.

People hold conviction without vision,
walking the subway floors, staring
out to empty highways.
Stale are the nutrients of each wished-on star.
Stale ambition bleating into
each small ear.

Lament now the corpses in caverns,
in parades and family restaurants.
Lament the eclipsed beauty of impulse,
the restraint of every compelling break-a-way.

For just one hope to tread behind
Jesus' sandal, freeze,
then crack all chains.

I would delight
in the struggles of individuals
conquering the downcast clouds
that hinder and fill a soul
with stagnant woe.

But like I am, sick with human
needs, political and ungenerous, I face
the storms and hide my pleas inside the
thunder.

Naked, lovers divulge
their infinite shades. Lovers
lean like dried up trees against
an autumn's ground, lean
for mercy and for each
affection denied.

But love they do
in the wintry airs
trying to overcome
personality, imbedded habits,
each other's foreign sphere.

I am pale, forgetful,
I lie awake all night taken down,
breathing the vaporous stench of
decay, in nightmares,
while kneeling before
the brightest flower.

I watch you thinning,
keeping
my anguish private,
for none will accept my five open
senses, the reasons for my withered will.

I cannot embrace my interior
with humble affection, but must
know the labyrinth's breathing tide;
mysteries renounced, complexities explained
by pensive reason.

Where I sit, seeking the inaccessible cure,
madness comes to kill through dissection,
definition and spiritual systems decreed.

In water I am numb,
drifting dazed through dark
androgynous waves.

I think of whispering to your waiting grave,
of netting grief and memory,
starving each of their sustenance
blind.

But then alone, in death, in life,
connection is our bread,
our higher air that beckons and repairs
the cracks that would kill on
tougher days.

How long to hold you in this sandpit sinking?
How long to watch your unwilling heart fade?

That I am through with annihilating snares
Through with the brutes of cold consuming despair

Through your life yielding to
sudden disease, through the closed door
that echoes strong sighs like screams
down corridors of love's
last stroke . . .

Longing for netherfields,
I want to run
in these subterranean, primal places, want
limbs of fire, eternally
red and dancing over the waking darkness.
I want to seal you

into the living Divine.

I am suspended, believing
the horror will not come, believing
death will not make
a skeleton out of you.

To Learn the Scarlet Vision

**Where does it go,
the shelter and the death?**

**What does it feed, that old
loathing sterility that laughs at all
creations, masters them into a craft
and calls itself superior?**

**How do we cherish without pride,
be extreme like a Russian prophet,
unguarded in the heat and ice of an
evolving spirituality?**

**How do we love like Jesus, mourn
like Jesus, be brave
against the inevitable and hope
through the sullen days to be
better, more than shadow
or collected habits?**

**How do we let go of what eventually
will be taken away?**

When This We Feel

**Our strength giving away
when love is undermined,
diluted like a ghost is from its human counterpart -
diluted yolk of a backbone
striving.**

**When battling the heat of dullness rising
When battling the waters that cry
for the breath of a sinking dream.**

**And spheres crack wide
laying exposed the true, the awful intent
of footsteps travelled. . .**

They told me of

a Secret colour.

I crossed the ancient hills,

**I bound my foot on heaven's shore,
bewildered at the seas.**

I went down with jealousy's riddled truths.

**I saw what I could not do,
could not cure
my envious heart.**

**But if I was like unfailed purity
with eyes like a child in
the rising morn . . .
And if I was translating prayers,
daughter of
the aspiring dreamers . . .**

**then the milk of my muse
I would be gargling
and bid for wanting
no more.**

Which Way Descending?

Unlike the golden spin of depth's dive,
petty matters wither so soon the singing voice,
cursing a life with
their digging stake . . .

No seed, no gift can flourish
with worry and empty toil.
There exists the thorn, the weight and
the mercy nailed
to every pain like a reminder
to persevere, and still
the small distractions
that scrawl like glass
upon the skull that kill
like a freezing.

Between the quicksand world and
the intangible wonder
all hearts must choose and cannot
straddle . . .

On Foot

I have seen alligators
enchant the innocent
into their swamp parlour.
I have tasted the earth,
transfigured in its nuclear playground.
I have been lifted into a violet sunset,
charred with soul-shattering burns.
I fell into winter's heaviness,
plunged my body into a chilling aqueduct -
stayed, sleeping out the human panic.

Lovely day to be freed of all
attachments: Let the storm revolve
around this abnormal world. Let childhood
serve as a consolation for withdrawing,
aged faces.
In a room a decade passes.
We walk in bewildered, we walk out unchanged.

This way, I move upward - toward blackness,
the edge of eternity.

I take seat beside the paradoxical judge.

I dream, a hundred miles away
from a new beginning.

A World Away

Your nights were cradled
in the boiling anguish
of knowing nothing, not
of your purpose and not
of the tide that brought
you from behind.

Your summers were jaded
by the men who beheld you
as one ripened, but luckily
robbed of suffering, and by the women
who left you, unable to withstand
your scissored breast, and spirit of
stubborn morbidity.

Take the gospel of your blessing
and of your balancing.

Take today what restores
yesterday's hollow ache and cursing.

Take these days in your hands and feast
until every sour doubt dies and

you mourn their passing
no more.

Safe In You

In you, mystery is masked
by no one's hood, has grown
away from the tyranny
of world and the gloom
of nations betrayed by
their gods.

In you the inexplicable
takes a womb, a rhyme
from your sweet blood
flowing.

And love, once pale and clay-like-cold,
selected you to partner my hope,
to resemble visions vacant of sentiment
and teach me to abandon
death and ill-nourished joys.

Your love wraps around like a melody
undulating out from your exceeding
intensity, it wraps,
until I surrender, unable, unwilling
to move.

My colours would be grey

**if not for your heart so
tempered by preserved dreams
and accepted disappointments,
dancing in the unknown,
with a tongue
unafraid to astonish or offend
the public swallower . . .**

**if not for every morning, finding
your eyes closed, sleeping near my
smiling body, and your lips that unearth
each tear from my harbouring breast,
unearth the giant seed of deliverance . . .**

**if not for our partnership,
our home of unhooded tenderness,
the doorways within that lead
to evenings of geranium spring . . .**

**if not for holding you, or
your touch splitting the shell
of my skin, flooding my womb
with fires of indomitable
peace . . .**

Stung

by the sad secret your simple blood
beheld. By the four-winds of colours
that multiplied into your warm and
fanatic fires, into the nudging madness
of your crying sex that landed near no one's
hearth, that landed alone to thirst the stuff of deeper
things and commune with what must forever
remain autonomous.

Dance between the clapping jaws
of vicious desires that want your face as
low as your heart can sink, down to the cold nadir
of self-hatred, where lies and needs are one.

Dance the drowned and crazy dance
before the light was scattered, after
each shelter is destroyed and
you are you - an odyssey of
unweaned creations.

Family

Feeling again
the joy of a matured
and multiplying love.

Seeing the seasons dissolve what was
but never the one thing
that keeps us close.

I lean on you like you do me through
the thick seductive world.

I savour your primitive spark,
your tongue that breeds an original
voice.

We are strong, born
of animal colour and spiritual desire.

And warm like blood
is the shade that stretches true
between us . . .

Journey & Drink

**There I sang and there I knew
my heart in all its wanderings.**

**Night fled from my shoulders,
travelled to where the saddened
watchers waited. It left me in my mousetrap,
chasing phantoms I never spun.**

**And there, the one thing
that was certain was the silence,
the ways of shrouds and sleepers.**

**Sinking from heights into sublime slavery,
I turned my back on choice.**

**I walked with spiders spiderlike, out
from my heavy tomb.**

**But it was not enough, to escape and then to
conform, but to be a brighter thing
than before the years swept my youth asunder.**

**To be where hardness is deserted
for the "yes, yes, I know."**

**And between the extremes, a patient
acceptance and making ready.**

**Yesterday I knew my bread,
I knew of boredom hounding
with full and ruthless speed.**

**Today, I swallow
(away from envy and ambition)
holding close
my one and lasting
treasure.**

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: Wascona Review; The Cape Rock; Envoi; Hook & Ladder; Crash - a litzine; Poetry Nottingham International; Jones Av.; New Hope International Writing; Psychopoetica; Written In The Skin (an anthology); madswirl.com; Leaf Garden Press; B-Gina Review; Indigo Rising; Quantum Poetry Magazine; Drunk Monkeys; Northern Cardinal Review; The Tophat Raven; Spokes; The Seventh Quarry; Novelmasters; Little Voice Leaping; Drift; Keep Poems Alive; SilverSpine Poetry Forum; Low Word; Creative Talents Unleashed; Sonder Magazine; Whispers; LiteraryYard; The Muse Journal; Dissident Voice; Snapping Twig; Inscribed Museum Literary Zine; Tuck Magazine; ken*again; Bold Monkey; Gossamer Poetry Page; Mechanical Medusa Poetry Forum; Boston Poetry Magazine; Vine Figure Poetry Page; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry; Smashed Cake Review (Sideral Journal); Bewildering Stories; Versewrights; Ygdrasil; Schrodinger's Cat; The Chaffey Review; Winamop; TwitchFit Lit Writing Zine; Medusa's Kitchen; Degenerate Literature Magazine; Grease Monkey Literary Forum; Minerva's Housecoat Writing Forum; Dog Is Wearing Pants Literary Page; Malevolent Pegasus Literary Zine; Reflections; Ascent Aspirations; Creek Side Writing Forum; Peacock Journal; Indie Poets Indeed; The Peregrine Muse; The Piker Press; The Galway Review; Poetry Life & Times; Nazar Look

Reviews of 'Journey of the Awakening':

"Journey of the Awakening is the first book of poetry that I have read of Allison Grayhurst. While reading it began to sound familiar, the comment to myself was "She is as good as Sylvia Plath". When I finished the book I read comments from others who referred to her as "In the style of Sylvia Plath"; Ms Plath, one of my favorite poets had no match until Ms Grayhurst's work. Congratulations to her on her achievements, I am already a 'fan', the love of her work will continue to grow," *Ann Johnson-Murphree*, poet and author.

"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. This, and other Grayhurst poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis*, poet, novelist and educator.

About the Author



Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three of her poems were nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2015, and one eight-part story-poem was nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2017. She has over 1,125 poems published in more than 450 international journals and anthologies. Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book, in Vancouver in 1995. Since then she has published fifteen other books of poetry and six collections with Edge Unlimited Publishing. Prior to the publication of *Somewhere Falling* she had a poetry book published, *Common Dream*, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman. Her poetry chapbook *The River is Blind* was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press December 2012. In 2014 her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series. In 2015, her book *No Raft – No Ocean* was published by Scars Publications. More recently, her book *Make the Wind* was published in 2016 by Scars Publications. As well, her book *Trial and Witness – selected poems*, was published in 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed (CTU Publishing Group).

Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album. "River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst" released October 2017.

Allison Grayhurst is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay;
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“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader’s personal involvement. Grayhurst’s poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance,” *Kyp Harness*, singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of *Wigford Rememberies*, Nightwood Editions; www.kypharness.net

“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst’s work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst’s poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett’s Quotations, lines such as “I drink necessity’s authority.” Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst’s work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water,” *Taylor Jane Green*, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of *Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology and The Rise of Eros*.

"Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is ... the poetry of Allison Grayhurst," *Blaise Wigglesworth, Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice.*

"Grayhurst's poetry is a translucent, ethereal dream in which words push through the fog, always searching, struggling, and reaching for the powerful soul at its heart. Her work is vibrant and shockingly original," *Beach Holme Publishers.*

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born," *Anne Burke, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.*

"Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry," *Eric M. Vogt, poet and author.*

"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. Grayhurst's poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis, poet, novelist and educator.*

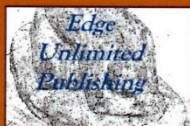
“When I read Allison Grayhurst's poetry, I am compelled by the intensity and strength of her spirituality. Her personal experience of God drives her poetry. With honesty and vulnerability, she fleshes out the profound mystery of knowing at once both the beauty and terror of God's love, both freedom and obedience, deep joy and sorrow, both being deeply rooted in but also apart from the world, and lastly, both life and death. Her poems undulate through these paradoxes with much feeling and often leave me breathless, shaken. Allison Grayhurst's poems are both beautiful and difficult to behold,” *Anna Mark*, poet and teacher.

“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry has a tribal and timeless feeling, reminiscent of the Biblical commentary in Ecclesiastes,” *Cristina Deptula*, editor of *Synchronized Chaos*.

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THE POETRY OF ALLISON GRAYHURST

"WHEN I READ ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POETRY, I AM COMPELLED BY THE INTENSITY AND STRENGTH OF HER SPIRITUALITY. HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF GOD DRIVES HER POETRY. WITH HONESTY AND VULNERABILITY, SHE FLESHES OUT THE PROFOUND MYSTERY OF KNOWING AT ONCE BOTH THE BEAUTY AND TERROR OF GOD'S LOVE, BOTH FREEDOM AND OBEDIENCE, DEEP JOY AND SORROW, BOTH BEING DEEPLY ROOTED IN BUT ALSO APART FROM THE WORLD, AND LASTLY, BOTH LIFE AND DEATH. HER POEMS UNULATE THROUGH THESE PARADOXES WITH MUCH FEELING AND OFTEN LEAVE ME BREATHLESS, SHAKEN. ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POEMS ARE BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND DIFFICULT TO BEHOLD." ANNA MARK, POET AND TEACHER.

"A RIVER IS IN ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POEMS. SOMETIMES IT RAGES OVER BOULDERS HIDDEN BENEATH RAPIDS. SOMETIMES IT IS AS CALM AND PLACID AS A SUMMER DAY REFLECTING SKIES SO BLUE THEY ARE AS UNUSUAL AS A STELLAR JAY'S WINGS. SOMETIMES IT IS AS UNPREDICTABLE AS THE RHYTHM OF CLOUDS GATHERING BEFORE A STORM. MADE UP OF WORDS, EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS, THOUGHTS CRYSTALLIZED INTO IDEAS, THIS RIVER, LIKE MOST RIVERS, IS UNFORGETTABLE. ONE POEM CASCADES AFTER ANOTHER INTO A FLOOD OF POETRY. AS IN THE POETRY OF WALLACE STEVENS, ALLISON GRAYHURST'S WORK CAN BE DENSE WITH MEANINGS HIDDEN BENEATH THE FLOWING SURFACE OF WORDS. THE EMOTIONS IN HER POEMS SEAR WITH THE POWER OF SYLVIA PLATH. ONE LAYER REFLECTS LIGHT OVER ANOTHER LAYER OF THOUGHT AND EMOTION THAT LEADS TO YET ANOTHER LAYER. THIS IS AS SERIOUS A POET AS IS WRITING POETRY TODAY. FOR THOSE ADVENTUROUS ENOUGH TO VENTURE INTO A RIVER WILD, DEEP, CALM, BEAUTIFUL, SHADOWED, LIGHT, FILLED WITH MOODS AND EMOTIONS OF BOTH AN INNER AND THE EARTH'S LANDSCAPE, THEN THIS IS A JOURNEY WORTH TAKING. IT LEADS TO EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE THE TEXTURE AND SUBSTANCE OF LIFE." THOMAS DAVIS, POET, EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR, PLAYWRIGHT, AND NOVELIST.



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